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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF
INFORMATION

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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS

Wednesday, February 4, 1931.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes

ANNOUNCEMENT: And now Station _____ presents another of the programs known as "The Primer for Town Farmers", bringing you Neighbor Thompson in a 10-minute chat intended especially for poultry raisers in his town-farmer audience. We present the "Primer for Town Farmers," as you know, through the cooperation of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. And now, Neighbor Thompson....

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Well, I have just been reminded by no less an authority than my friend, Mr. A. R. Lee, poultry husbandman of the United States Department of Agriculture, that it is high time I was making plans for my 1931 poultry flock.

Or rather, that it is about time for Mrs. T. to be making plans, since she is now the chicken raiser of the family.

We used to hatch our own chickens --- in fact, we did until last year. Now, like most of our neighbors, we are buying our baby chicks from hatcheries and with the small space we have, we find this plan very satisfactory.

Some of my neighbors --- and I suppose a good many of you folks --- are going even further. They are buying pullets in the summer, rather than bother with raising chicks in the spring.

In his letter, by the way, Mr. Lee emphasizes that the important thing is to plan so that at least half of the flock each year will be pullets; that is, if you want to get eggs in the fall and early winter when eggs are usually highest priced.

"Remember," Mr. Lee writes, "You can generally figure that it takes five eggs set now, to produce one pullet next fall, so if you are going to hatch your own chicks be sure to set enough eggs to produce the number of pullets you want for fall."

Now, assuming that some of you will have your chicks hatched in your own back yards, let me pass on these additional pointers and cautions that I've picked out of Mr. Lee's friendly suggestions to me.

First of all, of course, ordinary back-yard conditions are not ideal for getting good fertile eggs from breeding hens. The hens are usually too closely confined; and so it is practically necessary to see that they get all the direct sunshine possible and to get them outdoors at every opportunity.

Another thing: "Early chicks", Mr. Lee says, "are just as important in the business of the back-yard poultry keeper as they are to the affairs of the commercial poultryman. Early chicks grow better during the summer and come into production in the fall, while late-hatched chicks will not lay until the middle of the winter.

The hatching season is already getting under way in the Southern States, by the way, and will continue through early March but of course the best months in the North seem to be March and April.

Well, here are two old and well-known rules, which nevertheless, always seem to bear repeating.

In setting eggs during cold weather be careful not to expose them to freezing temperatures.

And by all means set fresh eggs; that is, eggs which have been held not more than a few days, never as much as a week.

Now, in buying baby chicks, my own experience and that of my neighbors have already convinced me of two things:

First, it pays to buy chicks from carefully selected disease-free flocks; if possible, from flocks accredited by the State agriculture college.

And second, it pays to get your stock from flocks which have been specially selected for high egg production.

Mrs. T., for the first time this year, is adding wire-floored open sun porches to her poultry equipment. My next-door neighbor, Bob Sawyer, who is an old timer at raising chickens, says they are a great thing for the back-yard flock, both for the hens and the young chicks. They are also recommended, incidentally, by Mr. Lee.

If you don't have much land a wire-floored porch - which keeps chickens off the ground but still lets them get sunlight and cool fresh air - is often a better yard than a small dirt pen which is very easily and quickly contaminated and is almost impossible to keep in a sanitary condition.

In fact, Mr. Lee remarked in his letter that chicks MAY be raised successfully on wire without even touching the soil at all---provided they get a well-balanced ration.

And incidentally, even some of the big commercial farms are making use of these wire porches now, both for raising chicks and for keeping hens.

Now, as to feed, I believe almost everybody is agreed that, if only a few chicks are kept, the best way is usually to buy the ready-mixed, baby-chick feed.

According to the latest word chicks need to be fed by the time they are 48 hours old or as soon as they are put into the brooder.

My friends who are by way of being poultry experts, advise feeding chick mash only, for the first 3 or 4 weeks; at which time, of course, grains may be added to the ration.

Now, I'm going to turn the remaining minute or two of my time over to passing on a few assorted tips from my neighbor Bob Sawyer, whose 15 years experience in both big-scale and small-scale poultry raising makes him something of an authority.

If you're hatching chicks under hens, says Bob, have your equipment all ready so that you can get chicks out as early as possible.

Also, to grow good chicks, keep them separate from the laying flock. Baby chicks stand little chance in mixing around with the grown birds.

Bob reminds me, too, that February is usually a wet month in the chicken house; and so it is necessary, for best results, that litter be changed frequently and special efforts be made to maintain good ventilation.

One way to do this is to open the house well during the day, in good weather, and let the sunlight penetrate through to the back of the house.

Now, a word about feeding table scraps. They undoubtedly reduce the feed cost for the back-yard flock, if they are fed in a clean, sanitary way. Sanitation, according to Sawyer, is the big thing in feeding scraps. He suggests either mixing them with the mash in the hopper, or feeding them in a trough or flat box which can be kept clean.

Feeding garbage on the ground or on the floor of the poultry house is, as Bob puts it, courting trouble.

Now, in addition to that bulletin on "Poultry Keeping in Back Yards," which is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1508, here's another one you may want to write for. It is called "Incubation and Brooding of Chicks," and the number is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1538.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Ladies and Gentlemen, you have just been listening to the "Primer for Town Farmers," brought to you by Neighbor Thompson. If you would like to have copies of the two bulletins he mentioned, write either to Station _____ or to the U. S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C., and they will be sent to you free of charge as long as the supply lasts. The titles and numbers, once more, are: "Poultry Keeping in Back Yards," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1508; and "Incubation and Brooding of Chicks," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1538.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

1.9 In3R

PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS Wednesday, February 11, 1931

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SPEAKING TIME: 10 minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Well, here is Neighbor Thompson again, turning a new page in the Primer for Town Farmers. As you know, Station______presents this program each Wednesday at this hour, through the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture. Today, our radio Neighbor is going to get down to brass tacks; he's going to talk about HOW plants are propagated, and how new plants get started. All right, Neighbor, YOU tell it...

---oOo---

There is a story going the rounds about the German scientist who is experimenting with the leaves of about 700 different kinds of plants, trying to grow new plants direct from the leaves themselves.

The funny part of it is, he is SUCCEEDING, at least with a good many of them.

But, whether you happened to hear this story or not, you've undoubtedly been reading the 1931 seed catalogs; and you've found, as usual, quite a few brand new--and improved--varieties of different fruits and vegetables.

And so, with the new garden season just ahead, I thought I'd take advantage today of the expert knowledge of my friend W. R. B.; and tell you something about this business of plant propagation. W. R. B., you know, is not only my next door neighbor, but he is also a specialist of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Well, everybody knows that the most common way of propagating plants is through the seeds. And another very important method is by cutting and divisions.

But in any case, W. R. B. points out that propagation is accomplished by some kind of separation, or division, of the mother plant. For, after all, a seed is simply a baby plant, which lies dormant until it finds the right temperature, moisture, and other necessary conditions for growth.

Now, unfortunately, we sometimes get all sorts of variations from seeds. For example, if you take the pit from the finest peach you ever saw or tasted ----and then plant it and raise a tree from it----you might get the meanest, most insignificant, poorly-flavored little peaches you ever stuck a tooth in.

And, as you know, the same thing is true of apples. Plant the seeds from a great big red Delicious, and grow the seedlings until they bear fruit; and

the result is likely to be a lot of scrawny, little apples that even a hungry pig would hesitate to eat. In other words few of our fruit varieties come true to the variety from seed.

As a matter of fact, "Johnny Appleseed" did a good work when he planted apple seeds all through the region just west of the Alleghany mountains; because those seedling apple trees paved the way for better varieties.

At the present time, most of our FRUITS are propagated by budding and grafting. The nurseryman who wants to grow apple trees, first gets a supply of seedling roots. Upon these he works, or grafts scions which are short sections of the previous seasons growth, taken from bearing apple trees of known varieties and quality. Then he plants these in a nursery for one or two years, and finally sets them out in the orchard.

In the case of peaches, the first thing is to plant the seeds. Then the resulting seedlings are budded, with buds taken from desirable, bearing trees. The bud, you know, is inserted in the side of the seedling tree near the ground; later the top of the seedling is cut off just above the bud; and so, the tree that develops has a seedling root and a budded top.

Again take grapevines and certain other of the small fruits and shrubs. They can be propagated by what are called hardwood cuttings; that is, short pieces of the last year's growth. These cuttings are taken during the winter, cut into even lengths, tied in bundles, buried where they will keep moist and cool but not freeze, until spring, and then are planted in nursery rows to form roots and start growth.

Then, we also have what we call soft wood cuttings, like the geraniums and many other flowering plants. Our grandmothers called them "slips." These "slips," or soft cuttings, are simply the tips or sections of branches 2 or 3 inches in length that are cut off and planted in sand, or sandy soil.

And now, we come to still a third kind of cutting---leaf cuttings. Take a leaf of red begonia, for example, cut it from the stem just where the leaf is attached, and lay the leaf bottomside down in a bed of clean, moist sand. It may be necessary to take a few toothpicks and peg the leaf down, so that it will be in close contact with the sand. But anyway, invert a glass jar over the leaf, keep the sand moderately moistened, and in a short time the chances are that you will have 4 or 5 little begonia plants starting at different points on the leaf.

Cutting the leaf into segments or sections, each of which contains one of the main ribs or veins, will sometimes help in getting the little plants to develop.

Now, of course, only a few plants can be started in this manner; but it IS interesting to watch the little plants spring into life, take definite form, and put on leaves of their own. However, just as soon as the plants are well started, they must be transplanted to soil, because sand doesn't give them sufficient nourishment.

Now, the second main type of plant propagation, which I mentioned to begin with, is that of root divisions. Rhubarb, for example, can be divided in this manner, and new plants started from pieces of old roots. Peonies are another good example.

Tuber cuttings are well illustrated by the potato.

Propagation by bulbs is also very familiar to most everyone. You plant tulips, for instance, in the fall for spring blooms but allow the bulb to remain in the ground until midsummer, and it will produce not only a new bulb, but perhaps several smaller bulbs. Each of these smaller ones may be removed and planted again, and they gradually grow into large bulbs.

Or, in the case of gladiolus, you plant the corms in the spring. They bloom, and form not only a new corm, but a whole cluster of little corms.

Now, in the case of bulbs, the propagation goes on underground. In many cases the bulbs, however, form seed on top, which may be planted; and this is how the plant breeders get new varieties. The bulb produced at the base of the mother bulb, or by division of the mother bulb, will be of the same variety; but when you raise one from seed, you may get a new variety with considerable variation---just as you would in the case of the apple or peach.

Well, you've observed how a strawberry sends out anywhere from 3 to a dozen runners---which steal off from the mother plant and start new plants. This is just another one of Nature's ways of perpetuating the species.

In the final analysis, there are really two distinct classes of propagation. One of them is provided by Nature, and includes propagation by seeds, by bulb divisions, by underground or surface runners, and so on. The other one is man-made----including budding, grafting, cuttings, and other means----all of which have for their purpose the propagation of particular types and varieties, and keeping them reasonably true to their variety and type.

These methods, you know, have been the means of standardizing the production of many of our fruits and flowers---and also a few of our vegetables. However, we depend almost entirely on seeds for propagating garden vegetables---keeping the strains pure by constant roguing, or by culling all of the undesirable plants from our seed stocks.

If you are interested in plant propagation, by the way, you will want a copy of Farmers' Bulletin No. 157, called "Plant Propagation." This little bulletin was written away back in 1902, by Dr. L. C. Corbett of the Bureau of Plant Industry, and it has stood the test during all of these years, furnishing many thousands of people information on how plants are propagated. It is still available, and you may get a copy for the asking. Another one is Farmers' Bulletin 1567, "Propagation of Trees and Shrubs" by Guy E. Yerkes. It takes up budding and grafting very fully.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Ladies and Gentlemen, you have just heard Neighbor Thompson, the Primer for Town Farmers man, discussing "Plant Propagation." If you would like to have a copy of Farmers' Bulletin 157, write either to Station______or to the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Radio Service OFFICE OF INFORMATION

1.9 In3P

PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS Wednesday, February 18, 1931

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes

ANNOUNCEMENT: And now Station_____ again presents the Primer for Town Farmers, through the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture, Neighbor Thompson seems to have been unusually busy lately, getting ready for his early garden; and he's on hand today to tell us something about WHY he has been busy. All right, Neighbor...

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I'm reminded of a verse written by Robert M. Adams, in one of his Rude Rural Rhymes. The last line explains particularly why I'm reminded of it:

"For though my cukes be bitter things,
My cabbages full of worms, by jings,
And all my snap beans full of strings,
Still to my heart the brown earth calls,
And all her summers, springs and falls,
Shall find my legs in overalls;
Shall find me spading loam and sand
With seven blisters on each hand."

I'm not complaining about blisters this winter, however, for two reasons. First, I came through the fall with very few of them; and second, I've got a better start with my garden this year than I've ever had before.

Last fall, an old fellow, who very plainly had seen much better days, came to my house looking for work. He had been a gardener; and so I got together with my next-door-neighbor, Bob Sawyer, and we hired him. It was a happy stroke. Bob and I not only removed one deserving man from the ranks of the unemployed; but we had more time to talk over the affairs of the world, and we got an excellent job done on our gardens.

Our hired man cleaned up all rubbish, fertilized the ground, spaded up most of it, dug trenches for sweet peas, and planted several hundred tulip and narcissus bulbs.

So this year, for the first time, I'm looking forward confidently to beating our other gardening neighbors to the starting post, with the first ripe tomatoes, the first fresh peas, and so on.

At present we have seeds of tomatoes, peppers, early cabbage and lettuce planted in shallow boxes in the house; and they will be ready for the coldframe before long. I'm also putting in seeds of parsley, sage,

thyme and a couple other herbs, so that the plants will be well started when setting-out time comes.

And it won't be very long until we'll be planting seeds of some of the annual flowering plants, indoors; and for that matter, several of the perennials, especially those which bloom the first year if they get an early start.

Well, of course, both Sawyer and I have already run up against the weed problem. So we called in W.R.B., our garden adviser, for a consultation.

Bob wanted to know if there is some chemical which will kill the weed seeds, in the soil which we're using for starting plants.

"Well," W.R.B. replied. "There is no CHEMICAL that you can safely use to kill these seeds, but I'll tell you what you CAN do. Get some large bread pans, about as big as you can get into your bake oven---but only about three inches deep. Fill them with the sifted soil, put them in the oven, and heat the soil for about two hours. Don't have the oven as hot as for baking bread, but just hot enough to give the soil a thorough cooking and steaming. Then, after you've finished, be sure to clean and dry the oven, and get rid of the smell that the steaming soil gives it.

"Now, if you want to be real sure that you are heating the soil enough, here's a good way to tell. Put a small potato in the soil and then bake until the potato is thoroughly cooked.

"If you do this, you'll not only get rid of most of the weed seeds, but you will destroy the plant disease germs that may be lurking around in your soil."

Well, Bob Sawyer has an old coal stove in his basement, which he uses for a laundry stove; and we're looking forward to a soil-baking bee one of these cold evenings. We're going to bake the soil into which our seedling plants are to be transplanted.

Incidentally, W.R.B. warned us about two things. First, he said, be sure to have the soil properly moistened before baking it; that is, it needs just about the degree of moisture which would be right for planting. And second, be careful that the temperature doesn't go much above the boiling point. Otherwise the soil will be dried out and there's possibility of driving off some of the ammonia and other plant food elements.

Of course, there's a big difference this time of year between the North and the South. Up in the extreme northern part of the United States gardens are still frozen several inches deep. And on the other hand, folks in the extreme southern rim of the country, are eating fresh lettuce, greens, onions, carrots and so on, right out of their gardens.

But anyway, wherever you live, it seems that this is going to be a boom year for gardens---not only vegetable gardens, but flower gardens and all other kinds of gardens.

W.R.B. tells me that he's been getting more letters and inquiries from gardeners this year, than he's ever had. They want to know about fertilizers, and about new varieties of vegetables and fruits, and about the hundred and one other things that town farmers would want to get information on.

And, by the way, there have been a lot of questions about fixing up the lawns; especially from regions where lawns were badly injured by drought last summer.

My own lawn problems are numerous. Mrs. T. and I checked them over the other day, and they make a long list. Here are just a few of the more important items.

First, cut back the hedge along the front of the garden; remove any shrubs that have grown too large along the house foundations, and get new shrubs to take their places; top-dress the lawn with fresh soil, fertilize it, and sow plenty of grass seed over the entire surface.

Another thing on Mrs. T's list is to start all over again to develop a bed of hardy phloxes. They didn't do well last year because of dry weather. We did succeed in starting a bed of delphiniums and several other perennials, but they are all on the list for renewed effort this year, and we want to get them started early.

Now, one other thing has happened in my community this week that I thought you might be interested in. Several of us were comparing notes on the early vegetables we expected to plant; and Bob Sawyer wanted to know why we couldn't all go in together this year and get the benefits of any slight discount which might come from buying in quantity. That is, for seeds and fertilizers. Well, the idea sounded good, and so we're going to have a little meeting in my basement workshop tomorrow night to talk it over. I'll tell you about it later on, if the plans go through.

Now, there are quite a few Department of Agriculture publications, that it seems to me are going to be valuable within the next few weeks. Let me mention a few of them. For instance, "Growing Annual Flowering Plants," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1171. "Weeds and How to Control Them," is Farmers' Bulletin No. 660; "The City Home Garden," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1044; "Roses for the Home," Farmers' Bulletin No. 750; "Herbaceous Perennials," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1381.

If you want to get copies of any of these bulletins, or if you want any other information, write to Station______, or write direct to the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Ladies and Gentlemen, you have been listening to The Primer for Town Farmers, brought to you by Neighbor Thompson. Let me read over again the names and numbers of those bulletins he mentioned today. "Growing Annual Flowering Plants," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1171; "Herbaceous Perennials," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1381; "Roses for the Home," Farmers' Bulletin No. 750; "The City Home Garden," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1044; and "Weeds and How to Control Them," Farmers' Bulletin No. 660. As you know, these bulletins are free, as long as the supply lasts. Simply address your requests to Station___ or to the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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FEB 1931

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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS Wednesday, February 25, 1931.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes

ANNOUNCEMENT: At this time Station ____ presents the Primer for Town Farmers, with our town-farmer friend, Neighbor Thompson, on the job as usual. Mr. Thompson continues today his chats on early-season garden activities, with a discussion of garden fertilizers. All right, Neighbor...

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You may remember that last week I quoted a little verse from the Rude Rural Rhymes of R. M. "Bob" Adams. It wound up with mention of blisters, of which I had just begun to develop quite a crop.

Two days ago I got a letter from a man who signed himself "T. Farmer." He asks, "Why bother about a few blisters?",and then goes ahead to tell how he feels about the situation, in the following Rude Rural lines by the same author:

"Stirring up the soil is good for rheumatics,
Good for your liver, your lights and lymphatics.
Even supposing that every crop fails you,
Still the old garden is good for what ails you."

Today, however, I want to talk about what is good for an ailing garden.

It's beginning to seem that animal manures, especially stable and barnlot manures, are pretty much out of the question for most of us town farmers. You're lucky if you're located so that you CAN get a supply for your garden each spring. Around this community, at least, most of us are finding that we have to depend on something else to keep up the fertility of gardens, lawns, and shrubbery borders.

Now, I'm going to pass on some of W.R.B.'s ideas on this fertilizer problem. W.R.B., you know, is a specialist of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and he has given this particular matter a good deal of study.

"For one thing," he says, "I have found that I can use the straw or scratchings from my poultry house, along with a portion of the cleanings from the dropping board. To this I add every piece of sod, and all the weeds and other refuse from my garden. And, I think this makes a very good substitute for stable or barnlot manure.

Now, here's the way W.R.B. is feeding his lawn. He uses 4 pounds of cottonseed meal and 1 pound of sulphate of ammonia for each 100 square feet. Dividing the lawn into 10-foot squares, like this, makes the amount easy to calculate.

Then, he spreads the cottonseed meal and the sulphate of ammonia on the concrete floor of the garage, and mixes them with a shovel. He is careful, he says, to break all lumps and to do a thorough job of mixing.

He applies this mixture in the spring just as the grass is about to start growing; and then, of course, he puts on a liberal amount of lawn grass seed and rolls the whole lawn with a heavy roller.

Now, let's turn for a minute to the fruit and vegetable garden. Under W.R.B.'s influence, most of us in this community treat our gardens in much the same way; and here's the way.

We use what is termed a complete fertilizer mixture; that is, one containing about 5 per cent nitrogen, 10 per cent phosphoric acid, and 5 per cent potash. This is applied, of course, while fitting the ground for planting; and the rate depends upon the kind of crop. As a rule, we make a general application of 5 pounds to each 100 square feet; and then supplement it by top-dressings for the crops that require a lot of fertilizing.

And here's where the compost made from the poultry-house cleanings and other waste material, comes in. It makes fine top-dressing for small trees, shrubbery, and flower beds.

In addition, of course, we plant cover crops, like rye and clover, and occasionally, hairy vetch.

I might add, too, that I have in the corner of my garage a bag of pulverized sheep manure, in addition to nitrate of soda, sulphate of ammonia, bone meal, and a good brand of complete mixed fertilizer. All are for top-dressing growing crops, or for preparing soil for roses or some other plant needing special feeding.

Several of my neighbors, incidentally, burn oak and hickory wood in open fire places, and I've been asking them to save the ashes. You know, hardwood ashes, which are not exposed to rain, contain considerable potash, and quite a bit of lime.

If you've never tried it before, however, let me caution you to be careful in the use of wood ashes. You're apt to burn the roots of the plants if you're not. Five pounds of fresh hardwood ashes is about enough for a space 100 square feet.

In this connection, also, nitrate of soda and its cousin, sulphate of ammonia, are highly concentrated carriers of nitrogen. They, too, will burn the life out of plants unless they are used sparingly.

As you know, these two chemicals and others of the same character are extensively used by commercial gardeners for top-dressing along rows of

growing plants that they want to force to a quick growth. Nitrogen is the element that forces leaf growth, so these fertilizers are especially useful in growing such crops as lettuce, cabbage, spinach , and mustard. Again, of course, caution is necessary. Commercial gardeners use only 150, or at most 200, pounds to an acre at an application. Figured on the basis of 100 square feet, this means considerably less thanone-half pound at one time.

Here's some further caution from W.R.B. "Don't use more than two applications during the growing of a crop. And under no circumstances apply these chemicals directly around the stems of the plants. Instead, scatter them over the surface where the feeder roots are located, so that they will either be cultivated into the soil or dissolved by rain or watering.

For instance, nitrate of soda can be scattered broadcast over a strawberry bed while the leaves are dry. Then brush the leaves with the branch of a tree or a light broom to remove any particles that may have lodged there.

Another way is to scatter the nitrate of soda over strawberries during a light rain, so that it will be dissolved immediately, and soak into the soil.

Incidentally, W.R.B. says that nitrate of soda will increase the size of strawberries. But, on the other hand, it is apt to make the fruit soft and quick to decay, thus spoiling its handling quality.

Now, for fruit trees. Apple, peach, plum and cherry seem to benefit by application of a little nitrate of soda or sulphate of ammonia, early in the spring before the buds open. Scatter 3 to 5 pounds over the ground under and beyond the tips of the branches, but not close to the trunk. Three or even 2 pounds is plenty for an apple tree less than 8 ot 9 years old, and older trees may benefit by an amount up to 5 pounds.

But, as W.R.B. says, don't overdo it. And don't use any form of nitrogen around or near PEAR trees. You know the reason is that it stimulates the vigorous growth which often results in blighting.

Now, several of my neighbors have been spreading lime on their lawns and gardens, and I've been getting quite a few letters about lime, also.

Well, let's get the attitude of the Department of Agriculture on this question. The Department specialists say that lime may be necessary under certain conditions where soil is extremely sour. But under other conditions, especially where the soil is already in condition to grow good crops, lime may be a detriment.

As a matter of fact, it seems wise to use lime only when a chemical test shows that lime is needed.

Remember, that most vegetables do best on a soil that is very slightly acid, or near the neutral point.

Certain ornamental plants, like Rhododendrons, Azaleas and laurel, require an acid soil; and they will not grow in a soil where lime is applied.

Well, this whole question of lawn and garden fertilizers is pretty complicated. It is SO complicated that it seems to me the only safe procedure is to follow the methods employed by commercial growers and nurserymen, and the advice of scientific workers.

My own policy, suggested by W.R.B., is to apply all the compost I can get reasonably, to my garden. And then to supplement this with moderate applications of high grade mixed fertilizers. Under this treatment my garden is getting better and better as the years go by.

Which reminds me of another little verse from Bob Adams:

"That man will find it hard to live
Who tries to take but never give.
E'en if he wins he is a grafter
Who'll have to face his sins hereafter.

So let us follow Nature's plan
And work in humus while we can,
Else when good Gabriel's trump shall blow,
Saint Pete will stand us in a row,
And likely tell us where to go.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Ladies and Gentlemen, you have been listening to the Primer for Town Farmers, brought to you by Neighbor Thompson, through the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture. Mr. Thompson will be back with you again, next Wednesday at this same hour.